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ABSTRACT

This 1990-91 program evaluation reports on the special education instructional programs of the Des Moines, Iowa, public schools which serve approximately 3,600 students daily and over 5,000 students per year with special education services as prescribed in their Individualized Education Plans. The three primary sources of program funding are: (1) state and weighted funding formula; (2) Area Education Agency support dollars; and (3) federal dollars. Human resources include 304 special education teachers, 195 associates, 22 special education instructional support staff, and 5 specific administrators. A variety of program models are offered. District wide goals are developed on an annual basis. Improved strategies in prevention, identification, instruction, and cooperation are the focus of the Neighborhood Schools Project. Plans for improvement include expanding the Project, increasing collaboration with regular education and community agencies, and intensifying efforts to recruit and maintain quality instructional staff. The report details programs for each disability area as well as data on input evaluation (e.g., budget, textbooks and materials); process evaluation (e.g., job descriptions, inservice and staff development); and product evaluation (surveys, audits, intended and unintended outcomes). (DB)

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91-046

SPECIAL EDUCATION INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS

PROGRAM EVALUATION
1990-91

February 1991

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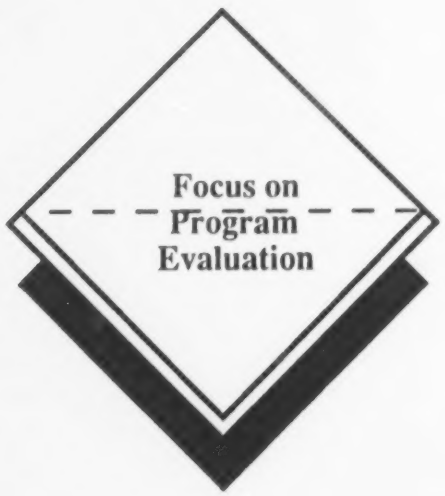

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EVALUATION ABSTRACT

SPECIAL EDUCATION INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS

Approximately 3,600 students are served daily in special education instructional programs in the Des Moines Public Schools. Throughout the year, over 5,000 students receive some form of special education service. These students are enrolled in programs designed to meet the unique needs of students with behavioral disorders, learning disabilities, mental disabilities, hearing impairments, physical disabilities and visual impairments. As required by law, each student has an Individual Education Plan (IEP) that addresses specific educational needs and any identified support services.

There are three primary sources for funding special education instructional and support services. They are the state and weighted funding formula, Area Education Agency (AEA) support dollars and federal dollars. These revenues support human resources, materials, equipment and transportation expenditures. Human resources consists of 304 special education teachers, 195 associates, 22 special education instructional support staff, five special education administrators, five special school administrators, and six secretaries.

The purpose of special education is to provide specialized instruction and support to students with disabilities. This is accomplished by serving students in a variety of program models designed to meet identified educational needs. The Department of Special Education develops goals on an annual basis to improve district programming and assure compliance with state and federal laws.

The Neighborhood Schools Project is an effort on the part of the Department of Special Education to improve the delivery of services to students with disabilities. This project is being conducted in conjunction with Heartland AEA and the Iowa Department of Education. Through this project, improved strategies are being developed in the areas of prevention, identification, instruction and cooperation.

Plans for improvement include refining and expanding the concepts incorporated in Neighborhood Schools Project. In addition, efforts will be made to increase collaboration with regular education and with community agencies. Other future plans include intensifying efforts to recruit and maintain quality instructional staff and maintaining current funding levels through the state of Iowa and Heartland AEA.

A copy of the complete report is available upon request from the Department of Information Management, Des Moines Public Schools, 1800 Grand Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50309-3399. Telephone: 515/242-7839.

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DISTRICT MISSION STATEMENT

"THE DES MOINES INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT WILL PROVIDE A QUALITY EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM TO A DIVERSE COMMUNITY OF STUDENTS WHERE ALL ARE EXPECTED TO LEARN."

DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

MISSION STATEMENT

"THE DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION WILL PROVIDE SPECIALIZED INSTRUCTION AND SUPPORT TO SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES TO MEET THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES."

CONTEXT EVALUATION

HISTORY

The Des Moines Public Schools has a long and proud history of serving students with disabilities in special education programs. Programs for students who were mentally disabled existed as early as 1912. Today, special education programs can be found throughout Des Moines Schools. Most program development in the field of special education has reflected the political philosophy of the time.

In 1931, Smouse Opportunity School was opened to serve students who were health impaired or physically disabled. The school offered academic training and related therapy in a protective environment designed to allow students to reach their full potential without the pressures and expectations placed on other children. The program was unique in that it was not a residential school and, as a result, was nationally recognized as an innovative program. After Dr. Smouse's death, the school became part of the Des Moines Public Schools.

Further growth and development of special education followed World War II and can be attributed to four events: (1) a thorough revulsion toward Nazi mass murder of retarded persons, (2) an adamant, unashamed, and well organized parent movement, (3) an emerging interest on the part of educators, and (4) increased public awareness of persons with disabilities.

During the 1940s and 1950s, the Des Moines Schools initiated programs for students with mental disabilities. "Developmental" classes for students with mild mental disabilities were started in the late 1940s. A pilot program for students with moderate mental disabilities was developed in conjunction with the Polk County Association for Retarded People in 1956 and was moved to Slinker School in the early 1960s. A work-study program for secondary mildly mentally disabled students was the second of its kind in the nation and was started at North High School in 1958 and was expanded to other high schools in 1968.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the nation became increasingly concerned with civil and individual rights. Parent advocacy groups such as the National Association of Retarded Citizens (NARC) and Association for Children with Learning Disabilities (ACLD) took an active role in promoting the rights of students with disabilities. The courts also became more involved with educational issues and many cases were specifically related to students with disabilities. In the late 1960s, the Des Moines Public Schools contracted with Orchard Place and the Des Moines Child Guidance Center to provide educational programs for students who were behaviorally disordered. In 1973, Congress passed Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. This Act stated that individuals with disabilities should have access to and participate in activities that are accepted by the majority of citizens as unquestionable rights. Emphasis was placed on prohibiting discrimination in employment and providing access to educational programs.

In 1975, Congress passed the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (Public Law 94-142). This far reaching legislation mandated that all children with disabilities have available to them a free, appropriate public education emphasizing special education and related services designed to meet individual needs. In addition, this law assured that the rights of children with disabilities and their parents or guardians were protected by procedural safeguards. This law and its subsequent amendments continues to be the major regulatory legislation for all special education programs. Its enactment represents a national commitment to provide a free, appropriate education to all students with disabilities.

In response to this legal mandate, a number of changes occurred within the nation, the State of Iowa, and the Des Moines Public Schools. Through the leadership of the Department of Education, Area Education Agencies (AEAs) replaced county-wide systems in 1975. AEAs were given the responsibility to assist local districts in administering special education programs. Since the District had initiated a number of programs for students with disabilities prior to P.L. 94-142, a separate agreement was negotiated between Heartland AEA and the Des Moines Public Schools. This agreement is renewed annually and provides the necessary funding for the District to separately administer its special education programs.

During the 1970s, the implementation and refinement of P.L. 94-142 resulted in a tremendous growth of special education programming throughout the nation and in Des Moines. Programs were developed or expanded to serve students with physical disabilities, mental disabilities, learning disabilities, behavioral disorders, visual impairments, and hearing impairments. Additional special education teachers were hired and by 1978 each building within the district offered some type of special education services. Support services were also expanded to address increased student needs. These positions included consultants, psychologists, social workers, speech pathologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists and work experience coordinators.

In 1973, Ruby Van Meter School was built to serve students who have severe, profound and moderate mental disabilities. Smouse School was reorganized in 1979 and students with physical disabilities were integrated into regular education settings. Smouse School became an elementary school for students with severe mental disabilities. Early Childhood Special Education was also developed at this time. Programs for students with behavioral disorders were started in regular schools and at Broadlawns and Lutheran Hospitals. A program serving students with autism was initiated in 1979 at Stowe Elementary School.

During the early 1980s, there was a growing concern regarding the increased identification of special education students. To address this issue, the Building Intervention Cadre Model (BIC) was developed to assist schools in implementing pre-referral strategies in an effort to reduce special education referrals. Another issue was the need to provide enhanced vocational opportunities for students with disabilities and as a result, the Transitioning Youth to Employment program (TYE) was developed at Central Campus in 1983. Concern was also expressed over physical accessibility to buildings in the District. In 1983, 1987 and 1990, building accessibility studies were conducted to identify schools that were accessible to students and parents with

physical disabilities. As a result of these studies, over $250,000 was spent on building modifications to make more schools accessible. Additional efforts are continuing in this area.

In recent years discussion emerged throughout the state regarding the overall delivery of special education services. The State Department of Education responded by establishing the Renewed Service Delivery System (RSDS) to promote and fund innovative pilot programs. The Des Moines Public Schools developed the Neighborhood Schools Project in 1989 which was funded as a special urban research project. This project emphasizes prevention, identification, instruction, and cooperation. Currently, it is being piloted in eighteen elementary schools, five middle schools and one high school. The Des Moines Public Schools is involved in the second year of this three-year project.

While the passage of P.L. 94-142 and subsequent legislation provided the legal impetus for growth, the role of dedicated parents and many advocacy groups must be emphasized. Innovative and dedicated special education staff have also contributed significantly to the development and refinement of services. P.L. 94-142 has continued to evolve through judicial interpretation and in 1990 the law was amended to The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (P.L. 101-476).

These factors have all contributed to the philosophy and the reality that all students receive a quality education. For the Des Moines Public Schools, this includes 3,600 students who are served daily in special education instructional programs.

POLICIES, STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS

Special education programming is mandated by the federal government and has corresponding state rules and regulations. An outline of the pertinent legislation is provided below.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Prohibits discrimination against handicapped in employment
- Prohibits exclusion of handicapped from federally assisted programs
- Requires building accessibility for handicapped
- Requires non-discrimination in schools

Education of All Handicapped Children (P.L. 94-142)
- Mandates free appropriate education
- Mandates least restrictive environment (LRE)
- Mandates Individual Education Plan (IEP)
- Mandates procedural safeguards

Carl Perkins Vocational Education Act (P.L. 98-524)
- Mandates equal access to vocational programming
- Requires vocational assessment
- Requires curriculum adaptation
- Requires counseling services

Education of the Handicapped Act Amendments of 1986 (P.L. 99-457)
- Mandates special education services for all 3-5 year olds
- Requires instruction for parents
- Provides voluntary participation to serve infants, toddlers and families (birth-2).

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (P.L. 101-476)
- Amends P.L. 94-142
- Includes autism and traumatic brain injury
- Includes transition services

"Rules of Special Education" Code of Iowa 670, Ch. 12
- Provides definitions, program models, class size, support services, licensure, transportation, tuition students, special schools provision, evaluation and placement, facilities, finance and appeal procedures

"Manual of Policies and Procedures, Special Education, Des Moines Public Schools"
- Provides Referral/Staffing procedures, guidelines for programs and services, three year reviews, least restrictive environment, facilities, evaluation, IEP, record keeping, confidentiality, procedural safeguards, and graduation.

OVERVIEW

Content

Each student enrolled in a special education program must meet state and federal eligibility guidelines and must have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) as required by law. The IEP is developed on at least an annual basis by, at minimum, the parent, special education teacher and the building administrator. The IEP includes (1) a statement of the child's present level of educational performance, (2) a statement of annual goals in each area of need as well as short-term objectives, (3) a statement indicating which special education and related service will be provided, (4) a specific indication of the extent to which the child will participate in the regular education program, (5) a projection of the dates services will be initiated and anticipated duration of services, (6) a statement or procedure for annual evaluation of the objectives and goals, and (7) a statement of needed transition services.

Most special education students are enrolled in regular education classes and receive special education assistance from a resource teacher. These students receive the same course content from the regular education teacher as other students but may also receive tutorial or remedial assistance with curriculum modifications and/or adaptations.

Special education students who do not benefit from regular education course content may receive a parallel curriculum provided by a special education teacher designed to meet individual needs. A small number of special education students are in need of an alternative functional curriculum that emphasizes daily living skills, personal/social skills and occupational guidance and preparation. Detailed curriculum information is available from each special education supervisor.

Instructional Methods

Special education programs are designed to foster the development and growth of students who have not been successful in regular education programs. The instructional methods utilized by special education teachers are as varied as the students they serve. Educational information is assessed, individual needs are identified and an IEP is developed prior to special education placement. Effort is made to match instructional strategies to student learning styles. Instructional methods that are used include: individualized instruction, small and large group learning, prescriptive teaching, cooperative learning, computer-assisted instruction, and behavior management.

Program Models

There are eight program models recognized by the Iowa Department of Education. These program models are arranged on a continuum from minimum special education intervention to maximum special education intervention. A brief description of the program models and teacher to pupil ratios are presented below.

1. Special adaptations (supplemental assistance). Authorized programs may include: intensive short-term special education instructional intervention, interpreters for deaf and hard of hearing, readers for visually impaired,

educational aides, aides for physically disabled or other disabled pupils for assistance in and about school, materials, and specialized or modified instructionally related equipment for use in the school.

2. Supplemental services. Services provided by special education personnel for pupils requiring special education include: Provision of information, consultation and support to classroom teachers, curriculum specialists, special education personnel and administrators.

3. Itinerant home services or hospital services. Pupils requiring special education shall not be denied special education when their condition precludes school attendance. Individual instruction is provided.

4. Itinerant services (school-based). Special education may be provided on an itinerant basis whenever the number, age, severity or location of pupils to be served does not justify provision by professional personnel assigned on a full-time basis to one or two attendance centers. Individual instruction is provided in cooperation with the regular class teacher.

5. Resource teaching program. An educational program for pupils requiring special education who are enrolled in a general education curriculum for a majority of the school day but who require special education in specific skill areas on a part-time basis. Teacher to pupil ratio is 1:18.

6. Special class with integration. An educational program for pupils requiring special education who have similar educational needs and who can benefit from participation in the general education curriculum in one or more academic subjects with pupils who are not disabled. Teacher to pupil ratio is 1:12 for elementary, 1:15 for middle and high school.

7. Self-contained special class with little integration. An educational program for pupils with similar educational needs who require special education but who can benefit from limited participation in the general education curriculum with nondisabled pupils. Teacher to pupil ratio is 1:8 for elementary, 1:10-15 for middle and high school.

8. Self-contained special class. An educational program for pupils with similar educational needs who are severely disabled and whose instructional program is provided by a special education teacher. Teacher to pupil ratio is 1:5.

ENROLLMENT

As of December 1990, there were a total of 3,610 special education students served in the Des Moines Public Schools. Of that total, 3,348 students were residents of Des Moines and 262 were tuition-in students from other school districts. In addition, 158 resident Des Moines students were tuitioned out to other districts as a result of Department of Human Services placements in residential facilities or foster homes.

The table on the following page lists enrollment by categorical disability and by program model.

SPECIAL EDUCATION ENROLLMENT

(DECEMBER 1990)

DISABILITY

	BD	LD	MD	HI	PD	VI	CM	NC	DD	Total
PROGRAM MODEL										
RO	1	0	0	4	19	3	0	0	1	28
RC	189	1,011	299	18	21	6	5	41	0	1,590
SI	87	205	90	5	16	4	2	0	0	409
CC	232	122	528	12	14	4	19	0	0	931
CS	231	0	134	22	30	0	0	0	0	390
Subtotal	740	1,338	1,051	61	73	17	26	41	1	3,348
Tuition-in Students	87	14	136	24	1	0	0	0	0	262
Totals	827	1,352	1,187	85	74	17	26	41	1	3,610

Key: Disability
- BD - Behavioral Disorders
- LD - Learning Disabilities
- MD - Mental Disabilities
- HI - Hearing Impaired
- PD - Physical Disabilities
- VI - Vision Impaired
- CM - Communication Disabilities
- NC - Non-Categorical
- DD - Deferred Diagnosis

Program Model
- RO - Supplemental Assistance
- RC - Resource
- SI - Special Class with Integration
- CC - Self-contained
- CS - Self-contained, severe

PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

It is understood that prior to any student referral, various interventions and procedures have been implemented to resolve existing instructional or behavioral problems. Parents are contacted when a student experiences difficulty and are informed of the nature of the problem and efforts being made to resolve it. If modifications and interventions are unsuccessful, students are referred, staffed and may be placed into one of the following special education programs: Behavioral Disorders, Learning Disabilities, Mental Disabilities, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Physical Disabilities or Vision Impairments. The following is a brief description of each of these programs.

BEHAVIORAL DISORDERS (BD)

Program Description

Students with behavioral disorders exhibit patterns of situationally inappropriate behavior which deviate substantially from behavior appropriate to their age and significantly interfere with their learning process, interpersonal relationships, or personal adjustment. These patterns of behavior may fall into one or more of the following clusters: **Cluster I**--significantly deviant disruptive, aggressive or impulsive behaviors; **Cluster II**--significantly deviant withdrawn or anxious behaviors; **Cluster III**--significantly deviant thought processes manifested with unusual thought patterns and/or behavior; and **Cluster IV**--autistic or autistic-like behavior.

Students with behavioral disorders in Des Moines Public Schools are served through a full continuum of special education services: (1) resource, self-contained, and severe programs in the regular school setting (K-12); (2) severe programs in the alternative school settings (6-12); (3) day treatment programs--Child Guidance Center (K-7), Focus Day Treatment Program (jointly operated by DMPS and Broadlawns Hospital--K-8), and Porter Avenue Center for Education (PACE) (jointly operated by DMPS and Orchard Place--6-12); (4) acute psychiatric care hospital programs at Broadlawns (6-12), Methodist (6-12), and Lutheran (K-12); (5) residential care programs at Orchard Place (K-12); and (6) specialized programs for students with autism and autistic-like behaviors operated in regular school settings (K-8).

Behavioral Disorders programs assist students in understanding and gaining control of their behavior and acquiring the coping skills necessary to re-enter the mainstream school environment. Three components are utilized in this process: (1) an overall classroom behavioral management system which clearly states behavioral expectations, consequences, and rewards; (2) an individualized behavioral program for each student as delineated in the IEP; and (3) direct social skill instruction (both group and individual) which focuses on helping students understand the causes of their misbehavior and on building their repertoire of appropriate, pro-active school-coping behaviors. It should be noted that in Behavioral Disorders programs operated in clinical settings, special care is given to coordinating the classroom behavioral program/instruction with the clinical services provided to ensure consistency in the overall treatment plan for the student.

Content

Appropriate academic and vocational instruction is also important to students with behavioral disorders and receives heavy emphasis. Due to the wide range of abilities and functioning levels exhibited by these students, a three-strand curriculum has been developed and implemented: **Strand 1**--the regular district curriculum utilizing the regular texts, goals, and objectives for students operating at or above grade level; **Strand 2**--a parallel curriculum which teaches the district objectives but which utilizes alternative texts and strategies when necessary for students who are operating one to two years below grade level; and **Strand 3**--a functional, life skills curriculum for students with limited intellectual abilities.

The curriculum offered within the autism classrooms focuses on developing appropriate socialization skills, self-care skills, receptive and expressive language skills, and academic skills. The academic curriculum offered varies greatly depending on students' individual needs, and a typical classroom may have some students operating at the readiness level while others may be at or above grade level. Due to the splintering of skills which often accompanies autism, an individual student may be operating at varying levels in different subject or skill areas.

The short-term nature of the treatment programs (14 to 30 days), dictates that the curriculum in the hospital classrooms (Broadlawns, Lutheran, and Methodist) focus on maintaining students in their home-school curriculum. Hospital teachers work closely with the students' sending schools and whenever possible utilize the same texts, assignments, goals, and objectives. These hospital teachers are also skilled in academic and behavioral assessment and provide these services as appropriate.

Needs

An increased number of young students are experiencing traumatic transitions into the school environment during preschool and the early elementary grades. Many of these students have multiple learning and behavior problems which are too often manifested through physically aggressive and dangerous acting-out behavior. It is also likely that the number of students experiencing difficulty will continue to grow as more drug-affected children reach school age. Consequently, the continued development and implementation of effective crisis intervention programs, comprehensive diagnostic services, and safe, structured educational environments for this population is imperative.

There is a continuing need to work with other community agencies in collaboratively developing appropriate educational and community treatment options for students with severe disabilities who are currently being served in out-of-district or out-of-state residential settings. In conjunction with the Polk County Decategorization Project, the District has just been awarded a Danforth Foundation Grant which will fund an educational liaison consultant position. This person will play an instrumental role coordinating collaborative interagency efforts in individual case planning and in the identification of future programming options necessary to meet the needs of these students.

The recruitment, training, and retention of certified, quality instructional staff continues to be a top priority. While the average length of service in behavior disorders classrooms for teachers in the district is six years, the national average is two years. However, our teachers' jobs are stressful and staff turnover remains higher than in other instructional areas. Concurrently, the pool of qualified applicants continues to shrink as fewer college students are opting for careers in behavioral disorders and certification requirements are becoming more stringent. There is a pressing need to work closely with the Iowa Department of Education and the state's higher education institutions to develop more innovative training and certification options for college students and teachers who wish to enter the field. Efforts need to continue in providing support to our quality staff in Des Moines and in recruiting new staff.

Teachers of behavioral disorders are not the only ones who may experience stress when working with this population. The provision of effective services requires considerable time, energy, and expertise on the part of building administrative and instructional staff, district support staff, and central office staff. Intensive staff development efforts need to continue in the areas of crisis intervention, behavior management, conflict resolution, social skills instruction, early intervention and stress management.

Goals/Objectives

The Behavioral Disorders program is guided by the following goals:

1. Assist classroom teachers in the development and implementation of effective early intervention strategies for students experiencing behavior problems in the regular classroom.
2. Consider and recommend the least restrictive environment in each situation.
3. Involve parents as part of the decision-making team for students with behavioral disorders.
4. Develop effective collaborative relationships with the other community mental health agencies in the provision of comprehensive educational and clinical services to children and families.
5. Provide structured, caring instructional environments which enable students to be successful both behaviorally and academically.
6. Provide intensive individual and group social skills instruction.
7. Provide comprehensive academic and vocational education services.
8. Develop and implement systematic "mainstreaming" plans which enable students with behavioral disorders to successfully reintegrate into the regular school environment as quickly as possible.

Improvements

1. 1976 to 1985--Developed and implemented a comprehensive continuum of educational services for students with behavioral disorders.
2. 1983 to 1985--Collaboratively planned and implemented the PACE and FOCUS day treatment programs in conjunction with Orchard Place, Broadlawns Hospital, and other community agencies.
3. 1985 to 1990--Developed and implemented the Building Intervention Cadre (BIC) model to assist regular classroom teachers in providing effective early intervention to students experiencing behavior or academic problems in the

regular classroom. BIC is currently operating in 27 elementary schools, 4 middle schools, and 1 high school.

4. 1984 to 1990--Developed and implemented a variety of staff development and in-service training in the area of social skills instruction.
5. December, 1990--In conjunction with the Polk County Decategorization Project, the District was awarded a Danforth Foundation Grant in order to expand joint planning and collaborative treatment services for students with severe disabilities.

LEARNING DISABILITIES (LD)

Program Description

Students with learning disabilities are of average intellectual ability but exhibit a severe discrepancy between potential and achievement in one or more areas of school readiness, basic reading, reading comprehension, math calculation, math reasoning, written expression, or listening comprehension. Such exclusionary factors as sensory deficits, mental health problems, and prior educational history must be considered and found not to adequately explain the academic deficit.

Students with learning disabilities in Des Moines Schools are generally served in resource or self-contained programs. The focus of the resource program is to provide intensive drill and practice in academic deficits during the time spent in the resource room and to work cooperatively with regular classroom teachers to modify the instructional content and/or environment. In recent years, some students with mild learning disabilities have been served within the regular classroom. This collaborative consultation model has gained more acceptance and impetus from the state Renewed Service Delivery System (RSDS). The focus in the learning disabilities special class with integration program is to provide parallel curriculum with appropriate modifications. These students are integrated into regular classes, according to the Individual Education Plan (IEP). For those students requiring major modification of curriculum due to severe learning disabilities, self-contained programs are available.

Content

Students in resource programs are educated through the regular curriculum the majority of the day with 30 minutes to two hours of remediation in basic skill deficit areas. Instructional methods in resource and modifications in regular class reflect more variety in teaching to learning styles and modalities.

Students in self-contained programs progress through a parallel curriculum using district content area learning objectives. Additional components of the learning disabilities curriculum are social skills, beginning with elementary students and vocational awareness, interest, exploration, and work experience with middle and high school students. Due to the emphasis on parallel curriculum, the learning disabilities self-contained programs utilize district textbooks whenever possible with modifications in presentation and pacing.

The Kansas University learning strategies model has been used in many of the learning disabilities resource and self-contained programs since 1984. These strategies emphasize teaching the learning disabled students how to learn in highly structured teaching episodes using mnemonic devices. The goal of this research-based model is to have the students generalize their study skills to meet the demands of the regular classroom. A consultant has been trained to teach the learning strategies and one learning disabilities teacher is receiving instruction to become a trainer.

Needs

There is a continuing need to have regular classroom teachers become more aware of the students' needs and to modify methods for teaching content within the regular classroom. Efficacy studies over the last ten years on the resource program have shown that these pull-out programs alone have little long range impact on student achievement.

As learning disabilities teachers leave the field and newly trained teachers replace them, there is a need to redouble efforts to offer staff development classes and in-services on classroom management, the Kansas University learning strategies, Curriculum Based Measurement (CBM) and collaborative consultation. There is also a need to develop a plan to retain and recruit competent teachers in this area.

In the last three years, the Special Education Department has attempted to redistribute self contained special education programs equitably and proportionately across the district. By moving several learning disabilities self-contained programs and adding necessary programs, students are able to attend school closer to their homes. There is still a need to pursue this effort at the elementary level. One viable method would be to combine learning disabilities self-contained programs with other special education self-contained programs.

Increasingly, students identified with learning disabilities are showing significant behavior problems in and out of the classroom. These behavioral indications are not consistent with a strict learning disabilities diagnosis. There is a definite need to work with the state Department of Education to deal with this issue of identification.

Goals/Objectives

The learning disabilities program is guided by the following goals:

1. Implement an appropriate parallel curriculum.
2. Modify the learning environment through a collaborative effort.
3. Determine individual strengths and needs through formal and informal assessment.
4. Involve parents as part of the decision-making team.
5. Instill strong work habits.
6. Consider and recommend the least restrictive environment in each situation.

Improvements

1. The Learning Disabilities Department wrote the first learning disabilities curriculum guide in 1983. During the 1990-91 school year, a committee was

appointed to revise and expand the original guide to reflect social skills and vocational areas.
2. As of August 1990, 50 resource and self-contained teachers have been trained in collaborative consultation.
3. In the last two years, 38 resource and self-contained teachers have been trained in Curriculum Based Measurement (CBM).
4. Between 1984 and 1990, 40 teachers have been trained in the Kansas University learning strategies.
5. Ninety-five percent of learning disabilities staff have been trained in using Apple Writer and have basic computer knowledge.

MENTAL DISABILITIES (MD)

Program Description

Over one thousand students with mental disabilities are served in various special education programs within the Des Moines Public Schools.

Mental disability is the inclusive term denoting significant deficits in adaptive behavior and sub-average general intellectual functioning. For educational purposes, adaptive behavior refers to the individual's effectiveness in meeting the demands of one's environment and sub-average general intellectual functioning as evidenced by a performance greater than one standard deviation below the mean (IQ = 84) on a reliable individual test of general intelligence valid for the individual pupil.

Students with mental disabilities are served in resource, self-contained with integration, self-contained with little integration and special school settings. Smouse School serves elementary students with severe disabilities. Ruby Van Meter School serves middle and high school students with severe disabilities through age 21. Preschool students are served in the Early Childhood Special Education program. (See Early Childhood Education Program Evaluation Report, June 1990.)

Students with moderate to mild mental disabilities attend regular elementary, middle and high schools and are mainstreamed into regular classes as specified on their Individual Education Plan (IEP). Individual goals and objectives are developed and taught by the mental disabilities teachers. The purpose of the program is to provide students the opportunity to develop the attitudes, knowledge and skills necessary to function within the community as independently as possible.

Content

Students with mental disabilities are diverse in their abilities and their potentials for learning to become independent. As a result, a continuum of curriculum options has been developed.

The curriculum for students with moderate/severe mental disabilities consists of instruction in Functional and Life Space Domains. The Functional Domains address academics, communication, personal care, social/behavioral and motor skills. The Life Space Domains address home living, community mobility, recreation/leisure,

career/vocational. As students get older, increasing educational emphasis is placed on career/vocational training and experiences.

The curriculum for students with mild mental disabilities served in self-contained programs is an alternative curriculum that emphasizes social skills training and functional academics at the elementary level. At the middle and high school level, the curriculum utilizes functional academics to support the areas of daily living skills, personal/social skills and occupational guidance and preparation.

Students with mild mental disabilities served in resource programs receive a parallel curriculum or the regular curriculum with modifications.

Work experience is available to all high school students with mental disabilities. Students participate in a variety of work situations in the school or the community that assist them in determining their career goals. A strength of the work experience component is the ability of the work experience coordinator to facilitate activities between the school, employer, the student and the home. The competencies needed by a student to perform on the job duties are taught and reinforced in the classroom.

In addition to work experience, students attend the Transitioning Youth to Employment (TYE) program at the Central Campus. The TYE program provides vocational assessment, pre-vocational and exploratory skills for all eligible special education students.

Needs

Recently, the Iowa Bureau of Special Education issued a state-wide directive that requires the re-staffing of all students currently attending special schools. It is anticipated that some of these students, particularly those currently attending Smouse School, will be staffed to special programs located in regular education buildings. This shift could cause under-utilization of Smouse School and will require additional classroom space throughout the district to serve students formerly served at Smouse and Ruby Van Meter. Long-range planning is needed to accommodate this movement to less restrictive placements and will need to specifically address space and building utilization, in-service training, and support to regular building teachers and administrators.

Similarly, there is increased desire on the part of many parents and advocacy groups to mainstream students previously served in self-contained classes. This will also impact the need for in-service training and support services. By definition, students with mental disabilities encounter social and academic frustration outside the special education classroom. Parents and others are requesting increased participation in regular education despite the social and academic frustration that many of these students may encounter. Students with mental disabilities, like other students at-risk, can profit from social interaction with all students. The district needs to expand course offerings, particularly in the vocational areas that do not require a high degree of academic proficiency.

Due to advancements in medical technology, the district is serving increased numbers of students who are "medically fragile." These students require accessible buildings,

specific transportation services, detailed emergency and health care plans, and knowledgeable teachers, associates and support staff to meet their unique needs.

Goals/Objectives

The mental disabilities program is guided by the following goals:

1. Educate students to their maximum potential.
2. Educate students in the least restrictive environment.
3. Provide a curriculum that teaches academic skills to support instruction in daily living skills, personal/social skills, and occupational guidance and preparation.
4. Provide a functional life skills curriculum for those students with severe or moderate disabilities.
5. Involve parents in the education of their children.
6. Develop a quality IEP to meet the unique needs of each student.
7. Provide transition services for students as they complete their education.

Improvements

1. A revised curriculum guide for students with moderate and severe mental disabilities was completed in 1986.
2. The Elementary and Secondary Teachers Handbook was updated in 1989-90.
3. Increased efforts have been made to involve parents in the development of IEPs.
4. Placement of students in the least restrictive environment has been a program priority.
5. The development of integrated programs in regular education settings has progressed as students have been re-staffed.
6. Transition plans have been developed to assist students and families to move from the school setting to the adult community setting.
7. Functional assessment techniques have been developed and implemented.

DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING PROGRAM (HI)

Program Description

Des Moines serves youngsters who are deaf or hard of hearing from birth through high school. Infants are served on an itinerant basis. Center-based programs for preschool and elementary students are at Lucas School. Callanan Middle School and Roosevelt High School have classrooms for secondary students. Support services include speech pathology, audiology, sign language interpreters, psychology, and social work. Classroom amplification equipment is provided for each elementary student. Middle and high school students utilize this equipment on a case-by-case basis.

Students who are deaf or hard of hearing may be served in a special class for all or part of the day. The amount of service is based on the individual need of each student as determined by the IEP. Most students are mainstreamed at least part of the day and attend regular classes with sign language interpreters. The program is currently experimenting with parallel teaching. This allows a teacher of the deaf to go into the classroom to interpret and make adaptations for these students in this setting. Parallel teaching permits more students to be mainstreamed into regular classes.

Most special education programs strive to have students attend their neighborhood school. This is not a goal for many students who are deaf. The National Commission on Education for the Deaf strongly recommends homogeneous grouping when programming for this population. This not only ensures appropriate programming, but provides a peer group which is critical for social/emotional development.

Home-school communication is also critical to the skill development of these youngsters and the staff plays an important role in educating parents regarding the ramifications of hearing loss. Sign language instruction and resources are provided to parents through in-service programs and teacher contacts.

The major objective of the program is to help students realize their full potential. For some students, this involves taking advantage of vocational options at Central Campus in order to prepare for a job after high school. For others, the goal may be to continue developing basic skills in order to allow them to pursue post-secondary training at a vocational school, a specialized college program, or at regional colleges and universities. Numerous community agencies are involved in assisting these students.

Content

Total communication is used in all deaf and hard of hearing classrooms. This practice incorporates speech and sign language simultaneously. Emphasis is placed on residual hearing, amplification, speech reading, facial expression, and body language as ways to further promote communication. All special education staff who work in this program are expected to be fluent in Signed English. Other sign systems are used with individual students when appropriate.

Language development is the most critical deficit area for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Language deficits negatively impact cognitive, academic, social, and behavioral development. Therefore, the deaf and hard of hearing program has a strong language based component at all levels. Language programming may encompass a majority of the instructional day with preschool and early elementary students. A language base must be established before academic skills can be learned. Consequently, these students often begin formal instruction in reading, writing, and math later in their school careers when compared to their hearing peers. A strong focus on basic academic skills is maintained throughout high school. The curriculum includes: (1) the regular Des Moines Public Schools curriculum; (2) a parallel curriculum utilizing alternative texts and materials; and (3) a functional life skills curriculum. Curriculum options are based on individual student needs.

Needs

There continues to be a need for additional classroom space for deaf and hard of hearing programs. This year, five teachers share two and a half rooms at Lucas Elementary School. This represents very limited instructional space. It also results in increased disruption as a variety of support people come in and out of the classroom. It is important that these five elementary programs be located in one building on a permanent basis with adequate classroom space.

Since selection of program sites has been based on space availability, the deaf and hard of hearing program is currently unable to use the feeder school concept. Once children complete the fifth grade at Lucas, they are sent to Callanan, while their hearing peers go to eastside middle schools. This often severs friendships and limits social growth. In addition, hearing youngsters who have developed sign skills no longer have an opportunity to use and maintain this talent.

Attracting and retaining qualified sign language interpreters is extremely difficult due to non-competitive salary schedules and limited training options. Interpreting is a highly technical skill and an essential service for mainstreaming students and providing them access to other school activities. A related need is to continue to upgrade the sign language skills of all staff serving these students.

Staff development is critical in order to remain current with this rapidly changing field. Staff and parents have identified needs in the areas of curriculum development, understanding the deaf as a cultural/minority group, and in establishing a parent support group.

Goals/Objectives

The major goals of the hearing impaired program are:

1. Provide individualized education for students to assist them in realizing their potential.
2. Provide instruction utilizing Signed English.
3. Assist each student to identify with the deaf adult community and to feel a sense of pride in identifying with this cultural/minority group.
4. Provide instruction with a strong language base.
5. Provide transition planning and exposure to post-secondary options.

Improvements

1. The communication policy is currently being finalized. This addresses all aspects of communication and how they relate to the deaf and hard of hearing program. This document will serve as the basis for developing evaluations, measuring staff skills and implementing appropriate in-service training.
2. With a strong focus on early intervention, parent training, and the provision of comprehensive services, more students are realizing their full potential and are able to learn and be leaders in regular classes along with their hearing peers. Many of these students are pursuing post-secondary training at institutions for the hearing impaired or at local colleges and universities.
3. Efforts have been made with the deaf community to be more actively involved with this program. These adults serve as valuable role models and assist in supplementing instruction.
4. Des Moines is piloting parallel teaching at the middle and high school level. This involves sending teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing into regular classrooms to interpret and make appropriate adaptations for these students. Initial results of this pilot are positive.

PHYSICAL DISABILITIES/VISION PROGRAMS (PD/VI)

Program Description

Students with physical disabilities have impairments of an essential body structure, system, or function. These may be orthopedic or neuromuscular in nature. Special adaptations may be needed for ambulation or mobility. Students with health care needs also are served in this program and may need catheterizing, assistance with transfers and toileting. Students with traumatic brain injuries have changed the complexion of the Physical Disabilities program. These students often need more intensive services in the first few months of recovery as they work to relearn lost skills.

There are two classrooms serving approximately 20 students with physical disabilities at the elementary level. Other students with physical disabilities who need services attend resource and/or regular education classes and receive support services as deemed necessary. Approximately 50 students are served in this capacity.

More students are served at the elementary level than at the middle or high school levels. Often students at the elementary level need special assistance for a few years and with special training are then able to progress with minimal or no assistance.

Students with visual impairments who are not able to progress in school without adaptations to materials and other services receive instruction in a special class setting or on an intinerant basis. Currently, there is one classroom serving five students with visual impairments at the elementary level. These students are integrated into regular classes as much as possible, but need special training in mobility and Braille reading. Twelve students with visual impairments receive itinerant services.

Content

The majority of students with physical or visual disabilities receive most of their education in regular classrooms and follow the district curriculum. Students may need assistance with transfers in and out of wheelchairs for activities such as toileting or setting up adaptive equipment to use in class. This type of assistance is provided by special education associates. Other students may simply require assistance from an itinerant teacher in obtaining large print materials for classes. If direct academic instruction is needed, students may receive services in a multicategorical resource program.

Students who need additional assistance in academic areas or intensive skill training in Braille or mobility are served in self-contained classrooms. The regular curriculum is followed for most students. A few students demonstrate problems with the regular curriculum and use alternatives such as Touch Math or the Edmark Reading Series.

Needs

There are primarily two areas of need related to the programs for students with physical disabilities. They are (1) the physical accessibility of facilities and programs, and (2) the training of staff (both regular and special education) in technical skill areas

and collaborative consultation. A collaborative effort between special education and regular education teachers is important in order to meet the unique needs of each student in all aspects of the student's educational program.

The cost of modifying buildings is dependent on individual student and program needs. The current practice is to develop accessible buildings within designated high school feeder systems. All new additions and modifications to existing buildings include accessibility considerations.

There is a need for more training in the areas of collaboration and technology for teachers who serve students with physical disabilities. Due to rapidly changing technology, ongoing staff development is essential.

Goals/Objectives

The following goals are being addressed by the physical disabilities/vision programs:

1. Provide an educational program that prepares students to be successful as adults.
2. Develop student independent mobility skills.
3. Develop independence in all areas through the use of special equipment, Braille, or other necessary adaptive devices.

Improvements

1. The District Accessibility Study, completed in 1983 and 1987, was updated in 1990.
2. Numerous screening checklists were developed in 1989 to assist in the identification of the need for student evaluations.
3. A referral information sheet was developed in 1989 to expedite the referral and screening process.
4. District-wide awareness activities were conducted in 1988 to increase the sensitivity of staff and students to students with physical disabilities.

DEPARTMENTAL NEEDS

The following generic needs exist for all special education programs.

1. Increase collaboration with regular education to accommodate students at-risk in regular education classes.

2. Increase collaboration with community agencies that serve students with special needs and their families.

3. Expand early childhood interventions to decrease the number of referrals for special education services.

4. Intensify efforts to recruit and maintain quality instructional staff.

5. Continue to place students in buildings in their high school feeder system.

6. Expand options for students who are head-injured, medically fragile, or drug-affected.

7. Refine data base to allow for longitudinal studies to determine the long-term effectiveness of special education services.

8. Integrate computer programs at the state and district level to reduce paperwork.

9. Maintain current funding levels through the State of Iowa and Heartland AEA.

DEPARTMENTAL GOALS

The Department of Special Education is guided by the following goals.

1. Assist classroom teachers in the implementation of effective early intervention strategies for students experiencing learning and/or behavioral problems in the regular classroom.

2. Involve parents as part of the decision-making team for special education students.

3. Modify the learning environment through collaborative efforts with regular educators.

4. Consider and recommend education in the least restrictive environment.

5. Develop and implement a quality IEP for all special education students to assist them in realizing their potential.

6. Provide comprehensive academic and vocational education services.

7. Develop collaborative relationships with community agencies.

8. Provide transition planning for all special education students to assist them in adjusting to adult community living.

DEPARTMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

The following major improvements have occurred to meet the needs of special education students served by the Des Moines Public Schools.

1. Increased vocational options for students enrolled at the Central Campus.
2. Developed transitional plans for students to assist them in accessing adult community services.
3. Adopted and implemented a plan to serve special education students within their resident high school attendance area when feasible.
4. Developed and implemented Building Intervention Cadres (BIC) at 32 schools.
5. Developed a position statement on serving students in the least restrictive environment.
6. Increased integration options for students with severe disabilities.
7. Developed and implemented the Neighborhood Schools Project at 24 schools.
8. Received a Danforth Foundation Grant to provide collaborative treatment services for students with severe disabilities.

BUDGET AND SOURCES OF REVENUE

The total special education operating budget for the 1990-91 school year is as follows:

Early Childhood Special Education	$1,408,879
Special Education Support Services	2,983,608
K-12 Special Education Instructional Programs	**24,902,567**
Total	$29,295,054

The information below focuses on those sources of revenue and budget expenditures necessary for the provision of the K-12 special education instructional program. Budgetary information regarding other special education services is contained in the Early Childhood Special Education and Special Education Support Services evaluation reports which are available upon request from the Department of Student Services.

1990-91 SOURCES OF REVENUE FOR K-12 SPECIAL EDUCATION INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS

WEIGHTED REVENUE

Program Model	Weighting	Dec. 1989 Enrollment	Dec. 1989 Weighted Enrollment	Revenue at $3,008 per Student
Supplemental Assistance	1.7	26	44.2	$132,954
Resource Teaching Program	1.7	1,482	2,519.4	7,578,355
Special Class with Integration	1.7	456	775.2	2,331,802
Self-Contained Class	2.4	794	1,905.6	5,732,045
Self-Contained Class	3.6	416	1,497.6	4,504,781
Sub-Total		3,174	6,742.0	$20,279,937

OTHER SOURCES OF REVENUE

AEA Revenue	$2,129,897
Federal Part B Funds	234,309
RSDS Funds (Neighborhood Schools Grant)	105,324
Tuition-In Revenue	1,800,000
Phase II Reimbursement	353,100
Sub-Total	$4,622,630

TOTAL REVENUE **$24,902,567**

1990-91 BUDGETED EXPENDITURES FOR K-12 SPECIAL EDUCATION INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS

HUMAN RESOURCES EXPENDITURES

Instructional Staff

Program Description	Number of Employees (FTE) Professional	Classified	Salaries	Benefits
Multicategorical	80	16	$2,735,483	$725,357
Physical	2	15	122,597	32,555
Hearing	10	19.5	473,499	125,733
Vision	1		38,830	10,311
Mental	98	63.5	3,636,880	909,220
Behavioral	72	74	2,601,537	690,812
Learning	30		947,377	251,567
Hospital/Homebound	11	7	360,371	94,617
Sub-Total	304	195	**$10,916,574**	**$2,840,172**

Administrative and Instructional Support Staff

The following administrative and instructional support staff directly supervise and support the K-12 special education instructional program for a budgeted expenditure of **$1,316,975** in salaries and **$340,321** in benefits.

Position	Number (FTE)
Director (also directs support services)	1
Supervisors	4
Special School Administrators	5
Instructional Consultants	16
Work Experience Coordinators	6
Clerical (also provides services to special education support staff)	6

OTHER BUDGETED EXPENDITURES

Transportation	$1,486,000
Indirect Costs	6,428,459
Materials, Equipment	292,936
Purchased Services (tuition-out costs)	990,806
Custodial and Utilities (special schools)	185,000
RSDS Expenditures	105,324
Sub-Total	**$9,488,525**

TOTAL BUDGETED EXPENDITURES **$24,902,567**

TEXTBOOKS AND MATERIALS

The special education instructional programs use a variety of textbooks and materials in order to meet the diverse needs of the students served. The Special Education Department participates in the district-wide textbook adoption process and, whenever possible, utilizes the same textbooks and materials used in regular education classrooms. These texts are provided by the District through indirect costs. Alternative textbooks, supplemental materials, and specialized adaptive materials utilized to follow the District curriculum but tailored to meet the various needs and learning styles of students are purchased with special education weighted dollars. Textbooks and materials addressing daily living skills, social skills, career/vocational skills, and functional academic skills, are used with students who need alternative curriculum offerings. Specialized textbooks and adaptive materials include the DASL Auditory Training Curriculum used in deaf and hard of hearing classrooms, tactile paper, adaptive crayons and pencils, and dark lined paper. Computer assisted instruction also plays a significant role in special education. All special education classrooms have access to computers and a variety of software programs.

EQUIPMENT

The same furniture and equipment used for regular education students are provided to students receiving special education services. Additional adaptive equipment used to accommodate students with special physical and instructional needs is provided through special education funds. Telecommunication devices, captioning equipment, Braille printers, posture chairs, microswitches, and specialized vocational assessment equipment are a few examples of the adaptive equipment purchased for use in special classrooms. Numerous special adaptations to buses and buildings have also been made to insure the physical accessibility and safety of students with disabilities.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

The Des Moines special education instructional programs reach out to a wide variety of public and private community agencies in order to deliver the array of services needed by children and families with special needs. The following list includes, but is not limited to, the growing number of community resources cooperatively involved and contributing to our special education programs:

Alcoholics Anonymous
Area Comprehensive Evaluation Learning Services
Autism Society of Iowa
Broadlawns Hospital
Central Iowa Employment and Training Consortium (CIETC)
Central Iowa Regional Housing Authority
Child Abuse Prevention Council
Child Care Resource Center
Childrens' Habilitation Center
Civitans
Dahls
Daycare for Exceptional Children
Deaf/Hard of Hearing Parent Support Group
Deaf Services Commission of Iowa
Department of Human Rights
Department of Human Services
Des Moines Area Community College
Des Moines Child Guidance Center
Des Moines City Hall
Des Moines Health Center
Des Moines Speech and Hearing Center
Drake University
Easter Seals
Family Counseling Center
Family Violence Center
First Call for Help
Goodwill Industries
Heartland Area Education Agency
Iowa Arts Council
Iowa Association for Retarded Citizens
Iowa Children and Family Services
Iowa Comprehensive Human Services
Iowa Methodist Medical Center
Iowa Parents of the Deaf
Iowa Protection and Advocacy
Iowa School for the Deaf
Iowa Special Olympics
Job Service of Iowa
Learning Disabilities Association
Legal Aid Society
Lutheran Hospital
Lutheran Social Services
Mainstream Living
Mercy Hospital
National Council on Alcohol and Substance Abuse
Orchard Place
Paratransit
Parent/Educator Connection
Plymouth Place
Polk County Association for Retarded People
Polk County Juvenile Court
Quota Club
Reading and Learning Center
Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)
Ronald McDonald House
Sertoma Club
Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children
The Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps (TASH)
United Way of Iowa
Vocational Rehabilitation
Volunteers from the deaf community
Young Women's Resource Center
YWCA/YMCA

OTHER INPUT INFORMATION

Interagency Programs

Des Moines Public Schools provides several educational programs for students with behavioral disorders in conjunction with the following hospitals or treatment centers: Broadlawns Hospital; Lutheran Hospital; Iowa Methodist Medical Center; Des Moines Child Guidance Center; and Orchard Place Residential Center. These facilities provide appropriate classroom space, plant maintenance services, and a significant portion of the furniture and equipment necessary for effective classroom operation.

Parent Training

The Special Education Department provides special training to parents of children with disabilities. These services range from special individual problem-related training to group instruction in areas of general interest. The District also participates in the Parent/Education Connection program which is facilitated through Heartland AEA. Parents are employed through this program to disseminate information and provide problem-solving assistance to special educators and families.

PROCESS EVALUATION

CURRENT YEAR GOALS/OBJECTIVES

The Department of Special Education develops goals annually . These goals focus on program needs and support building-based objectives. In broad terms, building objectives receiving support from special education include:

1. Improve instructional outcomes for at-risk students.
2. Reduce special education referrals.
3. Increase the number of buildings using the Building Intervention Cadre model.
4. Improve behavior, self esteem, and social skills.
5. Increase vocational opportunities for students.
6. Improve conflict management skills for students and staff.

The following goals were identified by the Department of Special Education for the 1990-91 school year.

1. Expand the District's Renewed Service Delivery System efforts through the restructuring of the Department of Special Education.
2. Continue to expand the Neighborhood Schools Project to ten new centers; seven elementary schools, two middle schools, one high school.
3. Complete the second phase of the Minorities in Special Education report.
4. Improve the accuracy of the district data base for special education.
5. Study the effectiveness of vocational education options at the home high school and Central Campus.
6. Develop a plan for serving alcohol and drug-affected children as they enter the educational system.
7. Develop a referral policy to address excessive cumulative absence of students to assure the school district is in compliance with all district and state attendance requirements for all students enrolled.
8. Implement the action plan for students with head injuries which was developed during summer of 1989.

RESPONSIBILITY STATEMENTS

Title: Director of Student Services

Responsibility Statement
The responsibility of the Director of Student Services of the Des Moines Public Schools is to: (1) maintain the integrity of the school district's mission, and (2) provide the leadership and vision necessary to insure that appropriate programs exist to meet the unique needs of children in need of special programs.

Organizational Tasks
The organizational tasks to be performed by the Director of Student Services include (1) planning and organizing the type and location of special education programs needed throughout the district, (2) developing the special education budget to maximize the district's financial resources, (3) providing leadership and support which fosters the development and implementation of new and innovative special education programs in each disability area, (4) serving as a liaison between the Des Moines Public Schools and Heartland AEA 11 Division of Special Education, (5) evaluating the district's special education programs to determine the short and long term goals of the Special Education Department, and (6) overseeing the management of the departments of Guidance and Counseling and Health Services.

Organizational Relationships
The Director of Student Services reports to the Associate Superintendent for Teaching and Learning and directly supervises special education supervisors, the Supervisor of Health Services and the Supervisor of Guidance and Counseling. Secondary supervisory responsibilities include the two special school principals, 16 special education consultants, and seven work experience coordinators. Also of particular importance are the relationships between the Elementary/Early Childhood and Middle/High School departments, central office and building administrators, the Department of Special Education at AEA 11, local parent organizations, and the Division of Special Education of the Iowa Department of Education.

Title: Special Education Instructional Supervisors

- Behavioral Disorders
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Learning Disabilities/Multicategorical
- Mental Disabilities
- Physical Disabilities/Vision

Responsibility Statement

The responsibility of the supervisors of Special Education is to support the school's mission statement by coordinating and supervising the development, maintenance, improvement and evaluation of professional practices and personnel within their assigned areas.

Organizational Tasks

The organizational tasks performed by the supervisors of Special Education include: (1) planning, implementing, interacting and evaluating the overall programs for students in special education; (2) planning and managing the disability specific budgets; (3) providing leadership and support to special education teachers and regular teachers in the implementation of programs for students with special education needs; (4) serving as a liaison between the Des Moines Public Schools and community agencies, Heartland AEA 11 and the State of Iowa Department of Education in all matters pertaining to special education programming in Des Moines and surrounding communities; and (5) providing direction and support to the parents of students with special needs.

Organizational Relationships

The supervisors report to the Director of Student Services; receive guidance from Heartland AEA 11 and other district administrative staff; and provide direction and supervision to all special education principals, consultants, work experience coordinators, teachers, and associates.

JOB DESCRIPTIONS

There are a variety of special education support personnel who are critical in ensuring that appropriate programs are provided to special needs students. A list of those personnel, along with a brief job description, follows. Detailed job descriptions are available in the Department of Human Resources.

1. **Consultants** provide direct ongoing support to special education instructional programs. They are involved in planning, staff development, curriculum development, methodology, and consultation to administrative and instructional personnel regarding services to special needs students.

2. **Work experience coordinators** provide support and assistance to instructional staff in developing and maintaining vocational instruction. They initiate contacts with employers to develop job sites and to supervise students at work. Work experience coordinators confer with students, teachers, parents, school personnel, and community agencies to coordinate vocational services.

3. **Special education teachers** possess a working knowledge of curriculum and methods for individualizing instruction. They are responsible for determining individual student needs through assessment and collaboration with other professionals. They are also responsible for providing direct instruction to students with special needs and consultation to regular educators.

4. **Special education associates** provide assistance to special education programs and students under the direction of a certified teacher.

5. **Sign language interpreters** translate the spoken word into the language of signs for deaf and hard of hearing students in mainstream settings. They are also responsible for orally interpreting the signs of deaf students.

6. **Principals of special schools** are responsible for the management of the building and providing instructional leadership necessary to meet the individual needs of each student in the building.

7. **Other support services** include occupational therapy, physical therapy, adaptive physical education, psychology, and social work.

IN-SERVICE AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Due to the variety of student needs addressed by special education programs, numerous in-services and staff development programs are offered on an ongoing basis. In-services during the 1989-90 school year include:

1. Social skills training using the Boys Town, Skill Streaming, and Crane-Reynolds Curriculum.
2. Non-aversive behavior management training.
3. Cardiopulmonary resuscitation for associates.
4. Sign language training.
5. Computer skills for students with multiple disabilities.
6. Auditory training for students who are deaf or hard of hearing.
7. IEP development.
8. Administering medications.
9. Sexual abuse of students who are deaf or hard of hearing .
10. Positioning and transfer of students with physical disabilities.
11. Curriculum based measurement.
12. Collaborative consultation.
13. Functional assessment.
14. Supervision of special education personnel.
15. Increasing speech intelligibility of students with mental disabilities.
16. Peer tutoring.
17. Cross-cultural and minority issues in special education.
18. Programming options for persons with autism.
19. Increasing pragmatic communication skills.
20. Collegial problem solving in the middle schools.
21. Understanding cochlear implants.
22. Transitioning Youth to Employment.
23. Kansas University learning strategies.
24. Study skills.
25. Building Intervention Cadre.
26. Neighborhood Schools Project.
27. Biobehavior states for students with profound multiple handicaps.
28. Conflict management.
29. Orientation for new special education staff.
30. Behavior management awareness for transportation personnel.

PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS

The staff involved in special education instructional programs also attend a variety of professional meetings. These include:

1. Council for Exceptional Children--Iowa Conference
2. Council for Exceptional Children--International Conference
3. Council for Exceptional Children--Mental Retardation International Conference
4. Council for Exceptional Children--Council of Administrators in Special Education
5. Council for Exceptional Children--Division of Career Development--state and national meetings
6. The Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps--state and national meetings
7. National Staff Development Conference
8. Iowa Conference on Hearing Impairment
9. Traumatic Brain Injury Conference--state meeting
10. Vision Conference--state meeting
11. National Conference on Habilitation and Rehabilitation of Deaf Adolescents
12. Learning Disabilities Association--state and national meetings
13. International Reading Association
14. Council for Children with Behavior Disorders--state and national meetings
15. National Autism Conference
16. Local and State Autism Society meetings
17. Midwest Leadership Conference on Behavior Disorders
18. Department of Education Annual Spring Conference

MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

State and federal law dictates the process by which students enter the special education system and how student progress is monitored. The Des Moines Public Schools has developed the Manual of Policies and Procedures for Special Education to assure district compliance with these established laws.

Students may be brought to the attention of special education personnel by parents, district personnel, or community professionals. The process is generally initiated when a building referral form is completed. At this point, the student concern is discussed at a building team meeting. This team is composed of regular and special educators, administrators, parents, and support personnel. Team members discuss the concern and recommend intervention strategies. One recommendation may be for the student to receive a comprehensive evaluation. Written parental consent is obtained before any formal evaluations occur. At this point, parents are informed of their due process rights.

Upon completion of the comprehensive evaluation, an educational staffing is conducted to discuss the nature of the problem, review evaluation reports, identify alternatives, and recommend a course of action. An important aspect of this planning

process is consideration of the least restrictive environment for each student. A variety of services are available to meet the individual needs of students. It is important that the service option selected meet the current needs of the student in the least restrictive environment.

If it is determined that a student should receive special education services, an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) is written. Each plan includes (1) a statement of the child's present level of educational performance, (2) a statement of the annual goals in each area of need as well as short term instructional objectives, (3) a statement indicating which special education and related services will be provided, (4) a specific indication of the extent to which the handicapped child will participate in the regular education program, (5) a projection of the dates services will be initiated and anticipated duration of services, (6) a statement or procedure for annual evaluation of the objectives and goals;,and (7) a statement of the needed transition services.

IEPs are reviewed and updated at least annually. A comprehensive reevaluation of a special education student may occur at any time to ensure that the program continues to be appropriate. This reevaluation must occur at least once every three years.

At the high school level, vocational training may become a major component of a student's program. The Transitioning Youth to Employment program at Central Campus assists in preparing students with special needs for the world of work. Staffings are held for special education students during their senior year to determine any remaining educational needs, to coordinate services with outside agencies as appropriate, and to assist the student in transitioning to work, post-secondary training, and/or independent living. Work experience coordinators assist special education students by providing vocational experiences in the community.

Numerous other safeguards are outlined in the Manual of Policies and Procedures for Special Education. These serve to protect parent and student rights, ensure appropriate educational programming, and assist the district in maintaining compliance standards.

PRODUCT EVALUATION

RESULTS

The results or outcomes for special education in Des Moines Public Schools relate to three major areas: (1) the provision of a continuum of services to address a diverse population, (2) the individual student progress as measured on the IEP, and (3) the extent to which students are placed in the least restrictive environment.

Des Moines Public Schools offers a comprehensive continuum of services for students with special needs. These services range from supplemental assistance to specific programs offered in specialized facilities. The continuum is described in the context of this report. This wide range of services, coupled with quality instruction, is not found in other districts within the state.

The primary means to monitor student outcomes is the IEP. Each special education student has individual goals that are developed to address specific needs that have been identified by the staffing team. Progress toward the goals is closely scrutinized by teachers, and specific objectives may be amended to ensure student growth.

Efforts to place students in the least restrictive environment and their neighborhood schools have increased significantly in recent years. Beginning in 1978, programs for students with moderate/severe mental disabilities were initiated in regular education settings. These programs continue to expand as students are staffed into less restrictive programs. Presently, approximately 92 percent of special education students are being served within their high school feeder system.

Successful interventions in special education have resulted in students meeting goals and moving to less restrictive placements or functioning successfully without special education direct instruction. The majority of students progress through individually tailored goals. If progress is not made, the building team meets with parents to make adjustments in the IEP or consider a more appropriate special education placement.

Neighborhood Schools Project

The Neighborhood Schools Project was initiated in 1989 and received funding through the State Department of Education. The following information represents accomplishments to date.

Schools Participating

1989-1990:	Ten elementary and two middle schools
1990-1991:	Eighteen elementary, five middle schools, and one high school

Neighborhood Schools Project (continued)

In-services Provided

Topic	Number of Staff Completing Course
Curriculum Based Measurement	67
Collaborative Consultation	83
Building Intervention Cadre (BIC)	139
BIC Maintenance	50
BIC Training in Progress	75
Introduction to Project and BIC	100 + (Hiatt & McCombs)
Functional Assessment and Eligibility	81
Total Receiving In-service	595

Development of district norms for Curriculum Based Measurement

- Tested 5,000 students three times
- Developed norms and tables for reading, math, and written language fluency for grades 1-5

Resource Room Placements

- Resource enrollment in ten elementary schools declined from a five-year average of 170 students to 150 students at end of the school year. The ten schools began the 1990-91 year with 121 students.
- Cooperative teaching involving general educators and resource teachers is in effect at McCombs, Hiatt, Callanan, Roosevelt, Mitchell, Pleasant Hill, and Wright Schools.

1990-91 Data Being Collected

- K-1 students assessed for self-concept, reading and math
- Regular class teachers surveyed for their perception of changing role of resource teacher.
- Regular class and resource teachers surveyed in depth on collaboration.

Visitations

- Cooperative Teaching Program in Hiawatha School, Minneapolis, visited by three principals, a resource teacher, and the coordinator of the Des Moines Plan.

Products Developed

- Second year grant proposal for $101,000 approved by the Iowa Department of Education
- K-1 report
- Pilot Procedures for Determining Special Education Eligibility
- Ten building plans written
- Teacher Interview Protocol

Activities in Progress

- Training 75 staff in Building Intervention Cadre (BIC) procedures
- Data collection on student outcomes in ten project and ten control schools
- Development of middle and high school BIC model.

Student Services Advisory Council

The Student Services Advisory Council was established in the spring of 1990 and includes representatives from each support area. The general purpose of the council is to foster better communication and coordination within the department. A specific task of the advisory council is to study the current delivery of support services to buildings and consider a possible restructuring to improve these services. Extensive meetings in cross-disciplinary groups were held during the spring and fall of 1990. Final recommendations will be submitted in the spring of 1991.

SURVEYS

Parent Survey

A parent survey was conducted by the District in 1985 to determine satisfaction with special education services. Areas which were addressed included: the special education staffing process, understanding their child's disability, understanding parent rights, special education records, the IEP, home/school communication, school climate, parent involvement, and District support of special education. The overall perception of the 927 parents who responded was strong satisfaction with special education services. Parents indicated that in some cases they had not received a written copy of their rights. The Special Education Department revised the process to insure that parents receive copies of the Parental Rights Brochure. The survey is available from the Department of Special Education.

Graduate Follow-up Survey

A five-year state-wide special education graduate follow-up survey was initiated in 1985 by the Department of Education and included graduates from Des Moines. The survey's purpose was to determine the adult adjustment of special education graduates and dropouts. The largest proportion of competitively employed persons was found within the learning disabilities group of 77 percent. Employment rates for behavior disorders graduates was 58 percent and for mental disabilities graduates, 62 percent. Specific information can be found in the report on file in the Department of Special Education.

Accessibility Studies

Accessibility studies were done in 1983, 1987 and 1990 by the Special Education Department. Results of the 1990 study show that Hoover and its major feeder, Meredith, are accessible. Two of the four elementary feeders to Hoover are also accessible. The other comprehensive high schools need stair climbers or elevators for accessibility. The respective feeders at the middle and elementary schools show great variation in the amount of accessibility. In most schools, modifications in restrooms would be necessary for accessibility. Students with physical disabilities who require wheelchairs are presently limited to the Hoover feeder system. The only other high school which could reasonably accommodate students in wheelchairs would be North High.

Integration Survey
An integration survey was conducted in 1988 by the Special Education Department to determine the extent to which self-contained students were integrated into courses at the high school level. Results of this survey assisted the department in increasing the integration of self-contained students into regular classes, school activities, regular home rooms, and increasing sensitivity of students toward their disabled peers.

Transitioning Youth to Employment (TYE) Survey
A survey was conducted in the spring of 1989 to determine special education teachers' perceptions of the TYE program regarding vocational exploration and career area placement. Results showed that special education teachers at the comprehensive high schools found the TYE program continues to provide needed vocational services for students and that the TYE reports are very beneficial in determining future vocational needs for each student. The survey is available from the Department of Special Education.

Special Education Student Withdrawal Survey
A survey on high school special education students who drop school was conducted May 1990. Results showed that 115 students out of the 795 special education students enrolled in grades 9 through 12 withdrew from school. This represents a 14.5 percent special education withdrawal rate for Des Moines as compared to the overall state special education average of 23 percent. Special education students who withdraw from school are currently being contacted by staff to encourage them to re-enroll or to assist them in contacting adult service providers. The survey and recommendations are available from the Department of Special Education.

Access to Vocational Education Survey
A survey was conducted in December 1990 to determine the special education student participation in vocational education classes at the comprehensive high schools. Results are being analyzed and the report will be completed in March 1991.

AUDITS

The Iowa Rules of Special Education state that the AEAs have the responsibility to "...conduct activities in each constituent school district at least once every three years to monitor compliance with the provisions of all applicable federal and state statutes and regulations and rules applicable to the education of handicapped pupils." (Department of Education, Rules of Special Education, 1989)

Due to the size of the district, Heartland AEA has initiated compliance visitations in one-third of the Des Moines schools each year. This allows all schools to be involved in the compliance review at least once every three years.

Previous compliance review reports were consistently complimentary to the district in terms of adherence to federal and state guidelines in special education. A review of the 1989 report on file revealed miscellaneous IEP deficiencies in using objective criteria, the need to file Adjusted Program Reports when rule exceptions are needed,

and certification discrepancies. The district Special Education Department responded with corrective action in the areas designated by the compliance report.

At present, Heartland AEA began the current compliance review with school visitations between December 12, 1990, and February 13, 1991. A report is anticipated by May 1991.

OUTCOMES FROM DEPARTMENTAL OBJECTIVES

The Department of Special Education held a compressed planning conference in December 1988 to examine areas of concern among instructional support staff. As a result of this conference, the following departmental goals were developed for the 1989-90 school year. Each of the goals involved committees representing consultants, work experience coordinators, psychologists, social workers, and supervisors.

1. Develop a plan to increase pre-referral/prevention programming, utilizing a report submitted by a steering committee to the directors of Elementary, Middle and High School, and Special Education by May 1990.

   Response: Continue to emphasize district-wide prereferral intervention by establishing a centralized working file of current at-risk programs and explore avenues of coordination with other at-risk programs. Expand the BIC model to all elementary buildings, pilot the middle school BIC model, and develop a viable high school BIC process. Explore the feasibility of implementing short-term (30-45 days) crisis/diagnostic centers. Increase in-service activities on prereferral interventions. Further information is available from the Department of Special Education.

2. Develop a multi-phase plan to decrease special education and "at-risk" student dropouts by increasing incentives and improving the curriculum for that population. Submit the recommendations to the directors of Elementary, Middle and High School, and Special Education by January 1990.

   Response: Data were collected and recommendations were developed to reduce the withdrawal of special education students from school. This information was submitted to the District's Task Force for Students At Risk. Recommendations are currently being incorporated into a district-wide report that will address program needs for all students at risk. This report will be available in the spring of 1991.

3. Develop strategies for positive recognition of all support, Educational Services, and Special Education staffs. Submit the recommended strategies to the Educational Services and Special Education supervisors by May 30, 1989.

   Response: A number of activities were implemented to provide positive recognition of support staff. Activities included an in-service on methods to

recognize staff, designing notes with logos for each support staff group, and providing a computer program to staff members with pre-formatted letters of appreciation. Further information is available from the Department of Special Education.

4. Improve efficiency of educational services by studying paperwork demands, clarifying roles of team members, reevaluating staff/personnel needs, and exploring resources available. A report of recommendations will be submitted to the Director of Special Education and Director of Educational Services by December 1989.

   Response: Recommendations from the paperwork committee were to continue use of the computerized IEP program as an option for teachers and to improve the roster management system by seeking compatible data base systems between the Red Book system, Mid-Iowa and the consultant roster programs. Further information is on file in Student Services.

5. Revise three-year evaluation and IEP process to be more functional as documented by a report of recommended changes submitted to the Director of Special Education by October 30, 1989.

   Response: Recommendations in the three-year reevaluation process centered on ensuring that building teams outline individual responsibilities and set timelines for completion of the review. Emphasis was placed on legal requirements of parent notification and involvement in the reevaluation conference.

UNINTENDED OUTCOMES

Because of the mandated nature of special education services, a consequence seen nationally and locally has been the development of separate systems of regular and special education. This, in turn, resulted in separate ownership for services to these students. The Special Education Department has addressed this unintended outcome for a number of years through district in-services and staff development opportunities. Major issues with the current system across the state are:

1. Special and regular education as separate systems
2. Special services limited to identified special students
3. Heavy reliance on pull-out programs
4. Over-referral and over-identification
5. Over-emphasis on standardized assessment techniques
6. Limited intervention options
7. Evaluation of compliance rather than pupil progress

Where the implementation of Public Law 94-142 resulted in a top down orientation in delivery services, the state Renewed Service Delivery System (RSDS) is oriented from

the bottom up with practices that are designed to serve students in a more flexible manner. The improvements in the RSDS are formed into three clusters:

1. Foundations of the Renewed System
   - Integrate the resources of general education and special education
   - Recognize the expertise of special education support and instructional personnel in addressing the challenges of education
   - Allow support personnel to serve non-disabled students requiring special education
   - Broaden the range of intervention alternatives
   - Utilize local attendance centers
   - Improve outcomes of services for students
   - Involvement of parents in meaningful ways
   - Keep paperwork to the minimal level

2. Organization of Resources
   - Provide staff development
   - Provide district/building plans
   - Implement transition services

3. Utilization of Resources
   - Implement functional assessment procedures
   - Provide appropriate instructional and support interventions
   - Provide direct and frequent progress monitoring
   - Develop outcome oriented criterion

The District's Neighborhood School Project is part of the RSDS effort. Outcomes of this project to date may be found on pages 36-37 of this report.

Other unexpected outcomes observed by the special education supervisors are:

- Some regular education students are interested in careers in special education as a result of their involvement and interaction with students with disabilities.
- The District's continuum of services has drawn more families into the community. This is evidenced by the large special education population and by the concentration of community resources in the Des Moines area.

STUDENT AWARDS

Student	Award	Sponsor/Agency
Joe Dyaus	Honorable Mention award for a poster he designed, 1990	Take Pride in Des Moines poster contest
Jon Buesch Angela Earhart Donita Monihan Leah Schnell	Academic letters in Advanced Placement classes, Spring, 1990	Des Moines Public Schools
Brandi Brackett Jon Buesch Terry Davis Mike Hankins Matt Pardekooper Jessica Schulte	Selected for Institute participation	Boys Town Institute for Gifted Deaf Students
Mike Hankins	Panel presenter at national conference on mainstreaming options for deaf and hard of hearing students.	Conference on Habilitation and Rehabilitation of Deaf Adolescents, 1990
Gia Harris	Gold Medal, Ice Skating, 1990	Iowa Special Olympics
Michelle Noftsger	Bronze Medal, Ice Skating, 1990	Iowa Special Olympics
Demesha Willis	Silver Medal, Ice Skating, 1990	Iowa Special Olympics
Pat Cutler,	Citizenship Award for Vocational Independence	Polk County Association for Retarded People
Randy Statler	Iowa Representative, 1990	International Special Olympics

STAFF AWARDS

Jerry Caster, Van Meter	Friend of Iowa - Physical Education, 1989	Iowa Association of PE Health, Recreation and Dance
Christine Clogg, Mitchell	State Lay Person Award, 1990	Iowa Guidance and Counseling Association
Jerry Collins, Van Meter	Iowa Special Olympics Coach of the Year, 1990	Iowa Special Olympics
Patty Joelson, Hoover	Friend of Iowa, TASH, 1990	Iowa - TASH (The Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps)
Rick Lussie, Student Services	President, Iowa Council for Exceptional Children - Mental Retardation Chapter. Chapter of the Year Award, 1990	National Council for Exceptional Children - Mental Retardation Division

Tim Miller, Lincoln	Appointed head coach for annual Shrine All Star Game, July 1991	Shriner's organization
Kelly Mitchell, Garton	Scholarship Award, 1990	US West

Special education staff members have assumed a strong leadership role in national and state organizations, including holding offices and presenting at conferences.

FUTURE PLANNING

1. Expand the "Neighborhood Schools Project" to include all buildings in the district. The project will focus on the following areas: (1) increased collaboration with regular education; (2) expansion of prevention and early intervention activities; (3) placement of special education students in the least restrictive environment; (4) placement of special education students, whenever feasible, within their high school feeder system; (5) continued development of innovative service delivery models for students with mild disabilities; and (6) the development of innovative pilot programs for students with moderate to severe disabilities.

2. Work closely with the Iowa Department of Education and the higher education institutions to develop and implement innovative programs for the: (1) aggressive recruitment of college students into the field of special education; (2) on-the-job training of prospective teachers through increased student teaching, practicum, and internship opportunities; (3) revision of current state certification requirements to allow for more flexibility in the training and employment of quality staff; and (4) recruitment and establishment of standards for sign language interpreters.

3. Intensify collaborative efforts with community agencies, particularly in the development of viable community education and treatment options for children who are drug-affected or medically fragile, and students with severe disabilities who are currently being served in out-of-district or out-of-state residential placements.

4. Continue to refine and integrate the various data bases currently being used to monitor the progress of special education students. Special attention will be given to developing a system which can provide meaningful longitudinal data on student progress.

5. Maintain the district's comprehensive continuum of services for students with disabilities, including those provided by special schools. While efforts should continue to integrate students with severe disabilities, it is important to maintain special school options in order to provide the expertise and service essential for many children and families.

6. Facilitate, support, and promote building based decision-making through increased collaboration with the District's various at-risk initiatives, integrated budgeting procedures, reorganization of instructional support services based on individual building needs, and increased collaboration with building staff in accommodating students with special needs.

7. Work closely with the AEA, Iowa Department of Education, and the state legislature to ensure that the necessary funding is maintained for provision of essential special education services.